

DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT
Secretary Roberta Gassman
201 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707-7946
Telephone: (608) 266-7552
FAX: (608) 266-1784
www.dwd.state.wi.us



**State of Wisconsin
Governor Jim Doyle**

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY SERVICES
Secretary Helene Nelson
1 West Wilson Street
P.O. Box 7850
Madison, WI 53707-7850
Telephone: (608) 266-9622
FAX: (608) 266-7882
www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov

**TO: Economic Support Supervisors
Economic Support Lead Workers
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators
W-2 Agencies
Workforce Development Boards
Job Center Leads and Managers**

**FROM: Amy Mendel-Clemens
Communications Section
Bureau of Health Care Eligibility
Division of Health Care Financing**

BHCE/BWP OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 04-63

DATE: 12/09/2004

FS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CC	<input type="checkbox"/>	W-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
FSET	<input type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input type="checkbox"/>	CF	<input type="checkbox"/>
JAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	JC	<input type="checkbox"/>	RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
WIA	<input type="checkbox"/>	WtW	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	EP	<input type="checkbox"/>		

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

SUBJECT: Enhancements to the Online Self-Assessment Tool (ACCESS)

CROSS REFERENCE: Operations Memo 04-40

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 20, 2004

PURPOSE

This memo outlines updates to access.wisconsin.gov, an online self-assessment tool first launched on August 16, 2004.

BACKGROUND

In summer 2003, Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services secured a \$1.7 million grant from USDA to develop and implement Internet-based access tools for FoodShare (FS), Medicaid (MA) and other services and benefits. The project is designed to increase consumer awareness of potential eligibility for FS and other nutrition and health care programs, improve customer service, and improve the quality of applications submitted to local agencies. One key strategy of the Governor's KidsFirst Initiative is to increase FS enrollment among eligible families and individuals.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

COMPLETED

August 2004 – The initial ACCESS website was launched at access.wisconsin.gov.

October 29, 2004 – A Spanish version of ACCESS became available at access.wisconsin.gov.

NEW

December 20, 2004 – ACCESS will expand to include an assessment of potential eligibility for the following programs:

- SSI MA
- SSI-Related MA
- MA Deductible
- Medicaid Purchase Plan
- Medicare Premium Assistance
- Institutional MA and Community Waivers
- Family Planning Waiver
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Free and reduced-price school meals
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- Tax credits, including state and federal earned income credits, the Wisconsin Homestead tax credit, and the federal child tax credit

FUTURE

Late in 2005, the website will expand to include an online application for FS and MA, as well as online tools that allow people who are currently receiving benefits to find out about the status of their benefits and report changes to their worker.

Subsequently, in early 2006, the self-assessment tool may expand again to include selected local and state programs.

PROJECT EVALUATION

Because USDA funds this project, we are required to evaluate the degree to which the online self-assessment tool helps to increase enrollment in the FSP. We have been evaluating the project in a number of ways, including the number of visits to the website. A question has also been added to the CARES screen CRIN to help us measure the number of people who used the self-assessment tool before visiting the local office to apply.

Initial data from our ACCESS evaluation show the following results:

- Over 6,500 people visited ACCESS between mid-August and mid-November.
- Of the 4,700 people who have completed the entire questionnaire, 85 percent appear to be eligible for at least one program.
- Approximately 6 percent of all “requests for assistance” at local agencies were from people who said they had used the ACCESS self-assessment tool.

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL ENHANCEMENT

Starting on December 20, 2004, the self-assessment tool will ask questions about the following eligibility considerations, which are needed for a potential eligibility assessment of Elderly, Blind and Disabled Medicaid (EBD MA). The following information will only be gathered when an elderly (65 or older), blind or disabled person lives in the home:

1. Residence in a nursing home
2. Need for nursing home care or in-home health care;
3. Receipt of Medicare;
4. If applicable, cost of nursing home care;
5. Amount of assets owned; and,
6. Possession of life insurance.

To ensure that the self-assessment can be completed in a 15-minute session, and to avoid questions that might discourage a user from applying for benefits, the self-assessment does not ask questions about the following EBD related eligibility considerations:

1. Special Exempt Income and Impairment-Related Work Expenses;
2. Receipt of health insurance other than Medicare; and
3. Value of life insurance.

Many of these eligibility considerations will be addressed in disclaimers present on the page where users receive their results.

SELF ASSESSMENT ELIGIBILITY LOGIC FOR EBD MA

In general, the self-assessment eligibility logic is similar to the eligibility logic used in CARES. The self-assessment will create groups for each program and will consider income according to CARES logic and/or the eligibility restrictions for that program. Because the self-assessment tool tests for all of the programs based on a single set of information from the user, it processes some information differently than CARES. For EBD MA subprograms, these differences are outlined below.

NOTE ➤For more information about the eligibility logic used for FS, Family Medicaid (FMA), and SC, please refer to Operations Memo 04-40.

SSI-Related MA

- ACCESS will not ask for or count Special Exempt Income other than child support.
- ACCESS will use the maximum shelter allowance to determine the shelter-adjusted categorically needy income limit.
- ACCESS will not perform a disabled minor unit test. Instead, it will provide a message about EBD MA for any household with a disabled minor that fails the income test for FMA.

MA Deductible

- If a household fails the SSI-Related MA income test (see above), ACCESS will subtract the Medically Needy limit from the person's income, multiply the result by 6, and round up to the nearest \$10 to find an approximate 6-month deductible amount.

Medicaid Purchase Plan

- Because it does not differentiate between children and stepchildren, ACCESS will count all children in the home when determining group size for MAPP. If there are children in the home and a disabled adult appears to be eligible for MAPP, ACCESS will provide a disclaimer about stepchildren on the Results page.
- ACCESS will not ask for or count Special Exempt Income other than child support, nor will it ask for or count Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWEs). For disabled adults who fail the income test for MAPP, we will have a disclaimer about IRWEs.
- ACCESS will not calculate the amount of any monthly premiums, but it will identify whether it appears that someone will need to pay a premium.

Medicare Premium Assistance Program (QMB, SLMB, SLMB+)

- ACCESS will test for Medicare Premium Assistance Programs only if someone reports receipt of Medicare.
- ACCESS will not specify which level of benefit they may be able to receive.

Institutional MA and Community Waivers

- ACCESS will assess potential Institutional MA eligibility for anyone who is in a nursing home or who reports that they are thinking about moving into a nursing home.
- ACCESS will not utilize spousal impoverishment logic. If someone has a community spouse, ACCESS will provide a disclaimer about assets.
- ACCESS will provide a combination of messages about Institutional MA and Community Waivers that depend on the income level of the person(s) who need long-term care.
- If someone fails the categorically needy income test for Community Waivers, ACCESS will not conduct a medically needy income test for Community Waivers. Instead, ACCESS will provide a message about potential eligibility for Community Waivers depending on their exact income and expenses.

CONTACTS

Autumn Arnold
BHCE/DHCF/DHFS
(608) 266-0157
arnolad@dhfs.state.wi.us

★Program Categories – FS – FS, MA – MA, SC – Senior Care, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, CC – Child Care, W-2 – Wisconsin Works, FSET – FS Employment and Training, CF – Children First, EA – Emergency Assistance, JAL – Job Access Loan, JC – Job Center Programs, RAP – Refugee Assistance Program, WtW – Welfare to Work, WIA – Workforce Investment Act, Other EP – Other Employment Programs.